

843 of a *taivaiwai* woman among the fishers. The woman must not cut her hair lest her strength be sapped. After one hundred days the woman is no longer a source of danger, and is in a state called *kunekune*. Her hair is cut for the first time since she has become pregnant, she bathes in the sea, and takes part in the communal net fishing for the feast which is provided by the relatives of the expectant couple. After fishing, the pregnant woman is rubbed with oil and dressed in her best kilt.

[184] On Fulanga no ceremony is held at the beginning of a first pregnancy, but the *i vaka votu ni ngone* is held after the first one hundred days of the first pregnancy of a married woman. It marks the woman's change of status to *kunekune*. The *vaka votu* ceremonies are held only for a woman's first pregnancy to mark the conception of her *ulu matua* (first-born), but the tabus are observed for all pregnancies.

Both parents observe certain tabus throughout the pregnancy to protect the foetus from harm and insure its growth. They abstain from eating any kind of fish which has been cut into pieces before being cooked, lest the child be born with a disease called *manaka na ika tava*. They must also abstain from eating the following sea foods: *vethu*, *kai ndawa*, *tuuru*, *lailai vai*, *yalewa matua*, *ndambe*, *ulumburu*, and *lolo* (sea eel) lest the foetus be injured.

CHILDBIRTH ⁵

844 On the day of birth and for two or three days after birth the mother and child are visited by relatives from the mother's and father's clans. The relatives bring small gifts of roasted ripe coconuts and mats, tapa, or oil. The gifts are presented without ceremony and are received by the paternal grandmother. They are kept by the child's parents.

For at least four nights after the birth a group of five to ten female relatives from both the father's and the mother's sides sleep in the house with the mother and child. This group is called the *songone* or *tonitoni*. When Makarete of Saumua clan, Tokalau, gave birth to a child, the *songone* consisted of the child's maternal grandmother, the maternal aunt, the paternal grandfather's sister, the paternal granduncle's daughter, the paternal aunt, and the paternal uncle's daughter. The child's father must feed the *songone* which stays from four to ten nights depending on his resources.

846 On the fourth day after birth a ceremony called *i silisili ndraru* or *vaka-
mbongiva* is held. The young mother bathes in the sea for the first time since the birth. She is accompanied by her own mother or other near relatives. The *songone* go fishing to secure sea food for a small feast provided for them by the father. On this day the midwife, if she is not a close relative, is presented with property such as tapa or mats. The tapa in which the newborn infant was wrapped at birth is removed for the first time, and the child is

⁵ For details concerning childbirth in Lau, see 23, pp. 27-32.

given a steam bath in the house. In a special oblong wooden bathing bowl (*kumete ni silisili*) are placed cut *waro* leaves. A hot stone is put on the leaves and the infant is held over the steam by one of the *songone*. When the leaves cease to give forth steam, the child is washed in water. This bath is to clean and heal the navel. No men are allowed in the house during the process. 846 852 ●

The most important birth feast is the *i mburua ni ngone*, which is usually held on the first or second day after the birth of any child. It may, however, be held on any day up to the tenth. This feast for a first-born, whether boy or girl, is larger and more elaborate than that for a subsequent child. The earth ovens of the father's and the mother's clans are used, but for subsequent children only the oven of the father's clan. If the family is prominent, the birth feast is large and attended by the whole village, if not the feast is attended by near relatives only. The birth feast of a child born out of wedlock is small. It is provided and attended by the mother's clan only.

Twins are desirable in Lau. Twin boys are called *ndrua tamata*; twin girls, *ndrua alewa*. 845

If a child is stillborn (*suthu mate*) the body is kept near the mother for three or four nights, for it would be harmful to the mother to take it away sooner. She would grieve and become ill with a sickness called *tandoka*, characterized by fainting, body pains, and sleeplessness. Stillbirths are buried in the cemetery above a previous burial from the same clan. The destiny of the souls of stillbirths is not clear to the natives. If both mother and child die they are wrapped in one funeral bundle and buried in the same grave. Their souls go to Nai Thimbathimba (p. 114). In miscarriage the foetus is kept two nights and then buried in the cemetery without ceremony. 766

When the child is born the father moves out of the house and sleeps in a men's house belonging to his clan until the child is weaned. Sexual intercourse with his wife is tabu during this period, but the father frequently has clandestine affairs with the women of the village who do not stand in the tabu relationship with him. 846 [834] 837

Feces of the infant are wrapped in *tapa* and kept in an excrement basket (*kato nda*) which hangs on the wall of the house where the child lives. This is done because they are a part of the child and removing them would cause the child to have diarrhea. For the first child the basket must be kept 100 days, after which the father throws it over the reef into the sea. The spot where it sinks is marked with a tabu stick. Nobody may fish there until the ceremony, called *mangitchi ni ona singa*, is held when the child is one year old. If the father erects a tabu stick he is obliged to give a big feast when the tabu is lifted. The feast adds to his prestige and to that of the child. If the parents cannot provide food for a big feast, they simply throw the basket into the sea without declaring a tabu. The excrement basket for a subsequent offspring need be kept only until the child shows he is gaining strength, usually two 854 [515] 164

854 or three months. It is discarded in the sea without a tabu. This custom of
[184] *kato nda* which is common on Fulanga is not found on all the islands.

852 A feast called *mangitchi ni ona singa*, which is held when the first-born is
[85] one year old, is not held for subsequent children. If the child's parents are
[43] prominent this is a large feast, marked by an affinal exchange of property. The
child is bathed in the sea for the first time on this day. The ceremony is
divided into two parts, the "bathing" and the "drying" rites. The bathing
rites (*mangitchi ni sili ki wai levu*) are held on the beach by the women of
the mother's clan. The mother's older sister, who is in charge, collects prop-
erty (*i suai ni sili*) from the mother's clan, bathes the child or chooses another
woman to do so, and distributes the portion of the *singa* feast which is eaten
by the women on the beach. The father's older sister, who has charge of the
drying rites, collects property (*vaka mamatha*) from the father's clan.
Parents of the child receive no share of this property which is ceremonially
exchanged and divided between the relatives.

On Namuka the first part of the ceremony (*i silisili ki wai levu*) is held
when the child is about four months old and the second part (*mangitchi ni ona
singa*) is held on his first birthday.

Another important ceremony for the first-born is the *mangitchi ni kana
mbaletchi*. It may be held at any time within the first year. On Fulanga this
feast is held on the third day after birth. Formerly when the child was of
a prominent family, this feast was attended by the whole village. Today it
is a clan feast only. The clan members gather in the house of the oldest living
male relative in the child's clan. The child is presented to the clan elder by
his paternal grandmother, if she is living, or by his father's or his mother's
sister. The elder sits on the mat with the child on his lap and food or kava
is placed before him. He reaches over the child for food or for a drink and
brings it to his mouth. Before the elder eats over the child, no one may do
so, not even the child's mother, but afterward anyone may. A small feast is
held by the relatives and property is presented to the elder by the child's
parents.

In high ranking families a small household feast, called feast of the first
tooth (*mangitchi ni vaka votu ni mbatchi*), is held for the first child's first
tooth. When the child begins to crawl another small feast, called feast of the
little old man (*mangitchi ni nggasinggasi*), is held. The last two feasts are
rarely observed in southern Lau.

[85] A small household feast called *mangitchi ni papi* or *mangitchi ni mbaptiso* is
held for every child at baptism into the mission church.

BOYS' PUBERTY

881 During my residence in Lau no boys' initiation ceremonies were held. The
following information was obtained from natives on Kambara, Namuka,
Mothe, and Fulanga.

851 names, but all children have at least two names; a Lauan name
553 and a Lauanized biblical name. They receive the latter at a
Christian baptism ceremony held in the mission church.

851 On the day of birth and for two or three days afterwards the
602 mother and child are visited by relatives from both the
431 mother's and the father's clan. The relatives bring small gifts
consisting of roasted ripe coconuts, mats, barkcloth, and oil.
The gifts are presented without ceremony, and are received
by the paternal grandmother. They belong to the child's
parents. This is one of a series of competitive affinal
exchanges which begin with betrothal and continue
throughout the marriage relationship in Lau. They serve to
emphasize the relationship of the individual in a patrilineal
descent group not only with his father's but also with his
mother's clan.

846 For at least four nights after the birth, a group of five to ten
female relatives from both the father's and mother's clans sleep
in the house with the mother and child. Formerly the
women stayed for ten nights, but the government has tried to
discourage this custom on account of the drain on the econo-
mic resources of the child's father, so now they stay longer
than four nights only if the child's father can feed them
without straining his resources.

852 The most important birth feast is held on the first or second
day after the birth. The birth feast of a first child, whether
boy or girl, is larger and more elaborate than that for a subse-
quent child. The kin of both father and mother provide and
prepare food for it, whereas only the father's kin do so for
subsequent children. If the family is prominent, the birth
feast is large and attended by the whole village; if not, the
feast is attended by near relatives only. The birth feast of a
[554] child born out of wedlock is small. It is provided by the
[848] mother's kin only.

On the fourth day another ceremony is held. The mother
bathes in the sea for the first time since the birth. She is

A FIJIAN IS BORN

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accompanied by her mother or another near relative. The group of relatives who sleep in her house go fishing to secure sea food for a small feast for which the father provides the garden produce. On this day the midwife, if she is not a close relative, is presented with barkcloth or mats. The barkcloth in which the newborn infant has been wrapped is removed for the first time and the child is given a steam bath in the house. No men are allowed to be present. Leaves of a certain plant (called *varo*) are placed in a special oblong wooden bowl. A hot stone is put on the leaves and the infant is held over the steam. When the leaves cease to give forth steam the child is washed in water. This bath is to clean and heal the navel. 852

On Fulanga the feces of the infant during the first few months are wrapped in barkcloth and kept in a basket hung on the wall of the house. The natives say they are still a part of the child and discarding them would injure him. If the basket of excrement is removed too soon the child will have diarrhoea. For the first child the basket must be kept longer than for subsequent children. After 100 days the father throws the first child's basket over the reef into the sea, and frequently marks the spot with a tabu stick. Nobody may fish there until after the ceremony which celebrates the child's first birthday. The father does not need to erect a tabu stick, but if he does so he is obliged to give a big feast when the tabu is lifted. The feast adds to his prestige, as well as that of the child and of his clan. The excrement basket for a subsequent offspring need be kept only until the child shows that he is gaining strength. It is discarded in the sea without a tabu and no ceremony is held on the child's first birthday. [753] 854

On all the islands a feast is held when the first child is one year old. If the parents' and child's clan are prominent, this is a large feast, marked by the ceremonial exchange of mats, barkcloth and other property between the father's and the 852 431 602

852 mother's clans. The property is divided between the relatives,
431 and the child's parents receive no share. On this day¹ the child
602 is bathed in the sea for the first time.
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539 CHILDHOOD ON KAMBARA

*Mothe, mothe, ko yandra, yandra,
Vuka mai na lupe ni wasa,
Ke lupe ndina, ke mothe manda-e.*

Sleep, sleep, and wake, wake,
The dove of the waves comes flying.
If he is a true dove he will sleep-e.

Lawan lullaby.

854 For the first year the mother and child live in a predominately
593 feminine world. Since the father's work takes him to the
gardens, the bush and the reef during the day, and to the earth
oven in the late afternoon, and since he sleeps in another house
at night, he sees the mother and child only at the evening meal
and occasionally during the day. Throughout the nursing
period, which lasts about one year, the father's chief rôle in
the cooperative enterprise of parenthood is the provision of
food. He takes little part in the baby's life until the child is
old enough to run. If the father does pick the child up he
carries him in his arms or on his back, never in a sling, which
is used only by women. One is more likely to see the grand-
father than the father with the infant on his lap. The father,
however, is proud of the child, especially if he is the first born.

854 During the nursing period the mother has practically no-
462 thing to do except care for and play with the infant. She is
relieved of her usual tasks, such as fishing, gathering greens,
and tending the kitchen fires, by the other women and girls
of her sub-clan. Since the females outnumber the males there
[1162] are always hands to do the comparatively small amount of
work that falls to the women. Unmarried girls fish and
gather greens and firewood for the kitchen. They also grate
and strain coconut for coconut cream. Older women, with
¹[i.e., the first child's first birthday. - Analyst]

881 the initiates. Food is provided daily for the boys by their fathers.

On the fourth day the initiates leave the men's house for the first time since the operation. After bathing in the sea they oil their bodies and dress in new white barkcloth provided by their mothers. It is wrapped around the waist twice, drawn over one shoulder down to the opposite hip, and tied. Meanwhile a large feast has been prepared by their relatives. The feast and a gift of barkcloth and mats, also provided by the relatives, are taken to the doctor's house and presented to him. Then the food is divided and eaten by the whole village. Although the boys may leave the men's house after the fourth day they continue to sleep in it for a month or two.

883 A youth's life changes radically after his initiation. He is accepted immediately as an adult male in the community and as such has all the privileges of a full grown man. He now begins to prepare food for the earth oven, sail on trading expeditions, learn a craft if he is a member of a hereditary carpenter clan, and participate in ceremonies and adult games. Women and girls defer to him and he begins to have secret love affairs with those who are not tabu to him. From a self-conscious inverted *pilo* he rapidly grows into a loud swaggering and aggressive youth, arrogant and condescending to women, and with great interest in the figure he cuts in the village.

858 The little Kambaran girl passes through no such difficult adolescent period as her brother. Her childhood is a slow growth toward marriage and child bearing. There is no stage in her development corresponding to that of the *pilo*. Formerly a feast was held to mark her first fishing, at about the age of ten, and she was tattooed at adolescence, but today she grows up gradually and her life is not punctuated by ceremonies or changes of status. Even her first menstruation receives no formal recognition.

000 When the mixed gang gradually breaks up, the little girl